

QA-110

Walnut Grove

Centreville vicinity

Private

early 18th century

Walnut Grove is probably one of the most unusual houses in Tidewater Maryland. The rare appearance of a saltbox form house combined with the unusual two room plan make this a house type that may be unique in the Chesapeake Bay region. Furthermore, it is apparently constructed in a most unusual manner, with a brick gable end and the remaining three walls constructed with log planks secured to corner posts. Although this has not yet been confirmed, it would be the first known example of this building method found in an early 18th century context. Other details of interest include the flared eave on the rear of the house, the glazed header chevrons on the gable eaves, and the corbeled brick cornice stops at the front and rear eaves. Interesting interior details include the exposed corner posts, the fine paneling in the rear room on the first floor, and the offset vertical paneling on the second floor. Although no positively dateable evidence can be found to substantiate popular claims that this is the oldest house in the county, certainly it is among a select group of perhaps a dozen buildings with legitimate claims to the first half of the 18th century.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Walnut Grove

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Northeast side of Reed's Creek on Wright's Neck Road

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Walnut Grove Associates

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Pennsbury Plaza

CITY, TOWN

Morrisville

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Pa. 19067

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: CWC 59

Folio #: 253

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland 21617

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1967

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

(see continuation sheet)

CONTINUATION SHEET

6.1 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Title: Francis Benjamin Johnston Collection

Date: circa 1930's

Depository: Baltimore Museum of Art

City: Baltimore, Maryland

7 DESCRIPTION

QA-110

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Walnut Grove is located on Wright's Neck, a point of land formed by Grove Creek on the north and Reed's Creek on the southwest. The house is sited on the northeast side of Reed's Creek, and is set back from the water several hundred yards. A small cemetery is located in a grove of trees to the southeast of the house, but is too heavily overgrown to allow ready identification of the stones.

The main house faces the creek. It is one-and-one-half stories high, three bays wide, and two rooms deep. This building is quite unusual in both form and construction. It is almost square, 24 feet long by 26 feet deep, and has a "saltbox" roof. The ridge of the roof is shifted toward the front of the house, and the rear wall is not as high at the eave as the front wall. The result is a house quite unlike the more typical Tidewater forms, and yet completely unlike the saltbox houses of New England. Even more unusual is the mode of construction. The southwest gable is constructed of brick but the remaining three walls are apparently post-and-plank. From the exterior, one would assume

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION

that these walls are of frame construction, but a close examination of the interior reveals corner posts in all three exposed corners. These might be dismissed as evidence of standard framing with exposed corner posts, but other sources suggest the walls are log. The earliest account may be found in H. C. Forman's Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland (privately printed in Easton, 1934) in which the author noted that the front and rear walls were log. This is confirmed by personal recollections of two local sources, both of whom saw the log walls exposed during past repair work.

The principal facade faces southwest, toward Reed's Creek. There is a door in the center bay, flanked by a pair of six-over-six windows. These are shifted toward the central door, rather than falling in a more symmetrically balanced bay system. On the second floor, there are two six-over-six gable roof dormers. The exterior siding is asbestos shingle, while the eave is finished with a box cornice with crown mold and bed mold. The corner boards and rakeboards are modern replacements. The high brick foundation had several repairs and alterations. The westernmost corner has been rebuilt, and the two cellar window openings have

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION

apparently been reduced in size, and are now fitted with three-light sash.

The northwest gable is brick, laid in Flemish bond with random glazed headers throughout and carefully laid glazed chevrons carried up the gable eaves. A single flush chimney at the apex of the roof serves all four of the interior fireplaces. Until recently the chimney cap displayed a plastered band of necking, but the cap is now gone, apparently knocked down in a storm. There are two tall, narrow, four-over-four windows on the first floor, one at each corner. On the second floor, a single four-over-four window is located to the right of the chimney. The lower window openings have queen closers on both jambs and are therefore original. The upper opening has queen closers only on the right jamb. The brickwork is somewhat rough, and it is possible this opening was originally smaller.

The foundation on this wall has also had considerable repair, and it is clear that several courses have been replaced altogether.

Of particular interest on this gable is the treatment of the eaves. The front and rear cornice is terminated

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.3 DESCRIPTION

against a corbeled brick stop, quite similar to the eave detail at Pear Valley, an early 18th Century house in Northampton County, Virginia. Also of note is the distinct flare to the rear eave at Walnut Grove.

The rear facade is similar to the front, with a door in the center bay closely flanked by larger nine-over-six windows. There is one six-over-six gable roof dormer in the center of the second floor. A one-story Victorian porch with turned posts and decorative brackets protects most of the first floor. The box cornice on this facade has a crown mold but no bed mold.

The southeast gable is partially covered by the later addition. There are no window or door openings in the exposed portion of this wall. A bulkhead entrance to the cellar is located near the center, and has been incorporated into a 20th century porch. The rakeboards on this end of the house are early, though probably not original.

The interior of the original house consists of an unusual two room plan, with the rooms arranged one behind the other. The front room is larger than the back room, and originally had a fireplace on the

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.4 DESCRIPTION

- center of the northwest wall flanked by a closet on the left and a cupboard on the right. This room was at one time paneled, but the woodwork and paneling was purchased during the Depression by the DuPont family, and installed in a house on Long Island. The fireplace was apparently blocked off at that time.

The stair to the second floor is located along the southeast wall of the front room. It is of modern construction and is enclosed by a plaster wall. It is not known whether the early stair also went to Long Island, or was simply in bad repair and replaced.

The room to the rear is smaller, only nine feet wide and 22 feet long. There is a corner fireplace in the south corner of the room. The chimney breast retains its early paneling and a simple mantel consisting of a board surround with a simple shelf supported by an ovolo molding with fillets.

There is a small cupboard above the mantel, with paneled doors hung on wrought H-hinges. Vertical raised panels are located on either side of the cupboard and on the sides of the chimney breast. There is a single horizontal panel directly above the cupboard. The paneling is terminated at the ceiling by a very

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.5 DESCRIPTION

fine cornice with a complex crown mold and bed mold. The two exposed corner posts in this room have carefully dressed surfaces and beaded edges, whereas the other exposed post, located in the closet to the left of the front fireplace, is left in the rough.

On the second floor, there is a large sleeping chamber that encompasses the northwestern half of the second story, with an unheated chamber between the larger chamber and the stair. A hall runs from the stair to the larger room, with doors allowing access to the south chamber and to a small store room on the north side of the hall. The partition walls are constructed of vertical boards with molded ovolo edges. They are offset, similar to the second floor partitions at Great Hopes (QA-1) and the third floor partitions at Cloverfields (QA-2).

The fireplace projects from the gable wall in the northwest room, and has a cupboard with raised panel doors hung on wrought H-hinges. A crown molding serves as an interior cornice around the chimney breast, which is boxed-in but not paneled.

Unfortunately there is no access point to allow examination of either the roof construction or the eaves.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.6 DESCRIPTION

The cellar plan is similar to the first floor, with a brick partition wall dividing it longitudinally into two rooms. The chimney base in the front room presently serves as a flue for the furnace. The opening that was blocked off was probably a fireplace, but may also have been a recessed relieving arch. If this were the case, the furnace flue was formed by cutting a hole through into the fireplace directly above on the first floor. This possibility is supported by the fact that the fireplace above has been closed off and is no longer used. The general plan and appearance of this house, however, strongly suggests that the cooking fireplace was originally located in the cellar. The rear chimney base is triangular in plan, with a recessed relieving arch.

Dating evidence for the original house is relatively scant. The visible framing (in the cellar) consists of pit sawn and hewn timber, and wrought nails are found consistently on all early fabric. The visible plaster lath is riven and secured with wrought nails. That the house would predate machine technology is a foregone conclusion, of course, but this establishes that some of the plaster and all of the second floor

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.7 DESCRIPTION

partitions date to the 18th century. The brick gable and the overall form of the house are the most useful evidence, both suggesting a date somewhere in the first or second quarter of the 18th century. The glazed chevrons, corbeled cornice stons and flared eaves are all features generally associated with the first half of the 18th century in Tidewater Maryland. The use of post-and-plank construction, if indeed such is the case, constitutes the only known example of this technique in an early 18th century context.

The addition to the southeast gable is offset from the main house, with the southwest facade set back almost seven feet from the front facade of the earlier building and the rear wall projecting a similar distance. This addition is of frame construction, one-and-one-half stories high and one room deep. The roof is a gambrel, and has been pushed forward along half of the front facade to cover a 20th century porch. The early part of this wing appears to date to the second quarter of the 19th century, but has been completely renovated, leaving no early fabric visible.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Walnut Grove is probably one of the most unusual houses in Tidewater Maryland. The rare appearance of a saltbox form house combined with the unusual two room plan make this a house type that may be unique in the Chesapeake Bay region. Furthermore, it is apparently constructed in a most unusual manner, with a brick gable end and the remaining three walls constructed with log planks secured to corner posts. Although this has not yet been confirmed, it would be the first known example of this building method found in an early 18th century context. Other details of interest include the flared eave on the rear of the house, the glazed header chevrons on the gable eaves, and the corbeled brick cornice stops at the front and rear eaves. Interesting interior details include the exposed corner posts, the fine paneling in the rear room on the first floor, and the offset vertical paneling on

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

the second floor. Although no positively dateable evidence can be found to substantiate popular claims that this is the oldest house in the county, certainly it is among a select group of perhaps a dozen buildings with legitimate claims to the first half of the 18th century.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

DATE

11/15/78

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland 21617

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

CONTINUATION SHEET

9.1 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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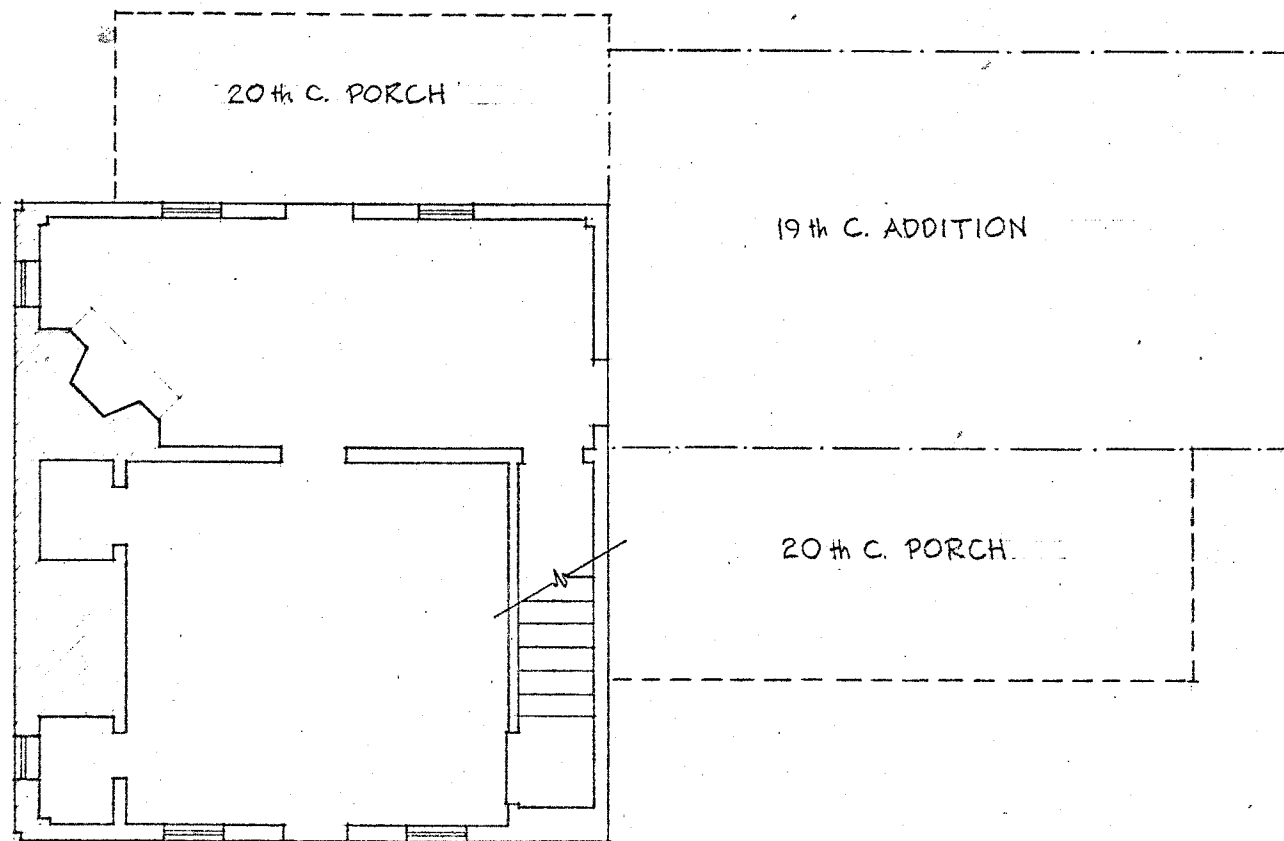
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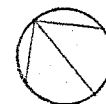
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0 2 4 6 8 10
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



ORLANDO RIDOUT V

QA-110

WALNUT GROVE
WRIGHT'S NECK, MARYLAND

JUNE 12, 1978.



QA-110
Walnut Grove

Mary McCarthy
Spring/Summer 2003
Digital color photo on file at MHT





QA-110

Photograph, American, 20th Century

Johnston, Frances Benjamin

WALNUT GROVE, Queen Anne's County
Maryland

Built about 1683.

Museum Purchase

38.43

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THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Baltimore, Maryland 21218



QA-110 Walnut Grove
Centreville vicinity
Orlando Ridout V, 1978 (MHT)
View from west



QA-110 Walnut Grove
Centreville vicinity
Orlando Ridout V, 1978 (MHT)
NW gable, camera facing SE



QA #110

Walnut Grove



Q.A.

110

Walnut Grove

April 1974
JWV